

Remarks at DeSoto Elementary School in New York City
October 3, 2001

The President. Okay. Thanks for letting us come. Can I introduce some people here? Mayor Rudy—do you know the mayor of New York, Rudy Giuliani? The Governor, George Pataki, of New York; and I'm President George Bush. And I wanted to come by your school to say a couple of things.

First, I want to say to the teachers who work in this school, and all throughout New York, how much we appreciate the courage that New York teachers showed. There are some—there's a lot of talk about heroes in our society. A hero is somebody you look up to, of course, and the teachers of New York City were very heroic.

They were not only heroic in taking boys and girls your age out of the buildings and helping them find places to stay at night or making sure nobody got hurt; they're heroic today. You know why? Because they love you. And if you've got any worries about what took place at the World Trade Center, they want to help you. Some of you—yes, they do want to help you, sure. They want to comfort you, and they want to make sure that you understand what went on. And I want to thank the teachers a lot. And I know the mayor and the Governor join me as well.

I also want to tell you, you live in a great country. You know that; you've been telling me that. The principal's saying that you're practicing—that they're learning about patriotism. It looks like they've got—Stephen, for example, "I love America," he writes. Do you know what? There's a lot of people who love America today.

And one of the things that we're learning, out of our sadness, is what a great country this is. And the best way to realize this country is to learn how to read and write, and that's what you're doing here; is to study hard, because this country says, if you work hard, you can realize your dreams. And that's what we're here to say to you.

We want to thank you very much for letting us come by. We want to thank your principals and thank your teachers. Tell your moms and dads hello. It's good to see you.

Anybody have any questions for me or the mayor?

Q. Mr. President—

The President. You've already asked your questions. [*Laughter*] I've never seen somebody try to ask so many questions in one day in my life. [*Laughter*]

Well, anyway, thank you very much—are you planting questions? [*Laughter*]

Thanks for letting us come by. A lot of people care for you—they really do—starting with your moms and your dads and your teachers here. A lot of people love you, too. Thanks for letting us come by to say hello.

Bye-bye.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:14 p.m. in room 204 of the school, P.S. 130. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani of New York City; Gov. George E. Pataki of New York; and Lily Woo and Howard Epstein, principal and assistant principal of the school.